THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) The Expert Committee on GM food and ingredients constituted under the Charimanship of Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research made recommendations for mandatory labelling of GM food which were considered by the Central Committee for Food Standards (CCFS), a statutory Committee under the provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954. The CCFS recommended to make it mandatory for labelling all genetically modified foods in the country. The amendment to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1955 on the basis of these recommendations of CCFS has been processed.

Below quality standard foodgrain samples

1091. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Grain Analysis Laboratory collects and analyses samples of foodgrains meant for public distribution system;

(b) whether any sample was found below quality standard during last one year; and

(c) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Central Grain Analysis Laboratory (CGAL) on its own collects samples of foodgrains brought by the farmers in various mandies of major producing States for sale, alone and analyses them to asses the quality. Data so generated is utilized in formulation of uniform specifications of foodgrains for procurement under central pool . Samples of foodgrains received in CGAL from Quality Control Cell and other sources are also analysed to assess the quality. Analysis results of the samples are communicated to the concerned for taking further necessary action, if any, at their end.

Failure of TPDS

1092. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the much-hyped Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for supplying subsidised foodgrain to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families has failed;

(b) whether as per the findings of Government's programme evaluation organization, the transition from universal PDS to TPDS has neither benefited the poor nor helped reduce budgetary food subsidies in the desired manner;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to improve the system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No Sir. The main objective of the Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is to ensure availability of foodgrains at reasonable prices to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in the country. The increasing trend of offtake of foodgrains under BPL indicate that TPDS is effective. The implementation of TPDS is the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments. While the Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of foodgrains upto the nearest Principal Distribution Centres of FCI in each State/UT, the identification of BPL families, issue of ration cards and issue of licences to the fair price shops and distribution of foodgrains to the beneficiaries is the responsibility of the respective State Governments/UTs. Government have occasionally received complaints in this respect and these have been forwarded to the concerned State Governments/UTs for appropriate action.

(b) and (c) The study conducted by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission have taken the sample size of 240 Fair Price Shops (FPS) and 3600 households in 60 districts of 18 selected States. Whereas the TPDS covers the entire population and there are more than 4.78 lakh FPSs spread all over the country. As many as 120 mobile Fair Price Shops were selected for the study which may be less than 1% of the total FPSs in the country. The study has not been conducted in difficult terrains/areas like Andaman & Nicobar islands, Lakshadweep, J & K, Nagaland, Manipur etc., where the TPDS is more relevant. The Study also ignored the concentration of BPL beneficiaries, in the selection of the study design units. As many as 25% of the total households selected were non-beneficiary households. The study have not indicated the confidence level and the sampling error. In view of this, it is not appropriate to draw the conclusion by the PEO study that the TPDS has not benefited the poor.

(d) Reforms in TPDS to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. Besides notification of the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001, involvement of the Panchayati

Raj Institutions, model citizen's charter, visit of Area Officers, constitution of vigilance committee and deputation of task force teams to check irregularities and to inspect and monitor the TPDS and the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Conference of State Food Secretaries, State Food Ministers meeting with All Indian Fair Price Shops Dealers Federation, and a meeting with all the members of Parliament was organized for strengthening of TPDS Regional Conferences are also being held with focus on the unique problems of the region and to facilitate strengthening of the TPDS in a manner, which may be relevant to the local environment. The recommendations made at these fora are at various stages of implementation.

Funds for food subsidy

1093. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of fund allocated for food subsidy during the current year and how much amount out of it is proposed to be spent on the purchase of foodgrains for below poverty line families;

(b) whether it is a fact that leakage and diversion of foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System has now gone upto 60% and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to do away with this system and if so, the details thereof and what alternatives Government have chalked out to help the poor persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) An amount of Rs 26,031 crore has been allocated as food subsidy for 2005-06.

In the budget estimates, an amount of Rs. 16,684 crore is the estimated subsidy to be incurred on issue of foodgrains to families below poverty line (BPL), including Antyodaya families during 2005-06.

(b) No report of such large scale diversion has been received from any of the State Governments/UTs. However, an evaluation study of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) conducted by the Planning Commission covering eighteen major States has observed that out of the